



For Immediate Release

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PRESCRIBED FIRES SCHEDULED TO BEGIN THIS SPRING

Public Meetings To Be Held In March and April

FAIRBANKS, Alaska—The Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service (AFS) is planning several prescribed fire projects to help federal and military partners reduce the potential for wildland fires that could threaten communities or military facilities.

According to AFS officials, receiving approval for a prescribed fire requires much preparation, planning and interagency coordination.

“First, we do our preliminary work which involves discussion with the land managers, analyzing available options, and developing a project burn plan,” said AFS Military Zone Fire Management Officer Tami DeFries. “We also obtain a smoke permit from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation before proceeding.”

The process includes precise monitoring of site and weather conditions while adhering to carefully determined site prescriptions said DeFries. “Ignitions typically occur between late April and early June, when weather conditions tend to be most favorable.”

Projects now in the planning phase include removing fuels where there exists a high potential for fires around military weapon ranges and training areas. Military activities conducted during dry weather can lead to a high potential for fires around these facilities.

Planning is currently being conducted for projects on Fort Wainwright, the Donnelly Training Area adjacent to Fort Greely and Fort Richardson.

There is also an interagency prescribed fire project in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service being planned near Beaver, and a project is being planned in Alphabet Hills to improve wildlife habitat, particularly for moose.

DeFries said that in all projects, safety is paramount. “Public and firefighter safety is always our top priority,” she said. “We only proceed with ignitions if the conditions are conducive to meeting the project goals safely.”

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Keeping the public informed about the planned projects is also a key goal of the program.

“We plan to host public meetings in Anchorage, Delta, Fairbanks and Glennallen,” said DeFries, “where specific information will be available about each project.”

She added that prescribed fires are an integral part of implementing the National Fire Plan, and help to restore ecosystems while managing the impacts of wildfires on communities and the environment.

For more information, telephone 907-356-5511.

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Public Meeting Schedule

Date	Time	City/Town	Address
March 13, 2006	5 PM to 7 PM	Anchorage	BLM Anchorage Field Office 68 th Ave. & Abbott Loop Road
March 15, 2006	5:30 PM to 7:30 PM	Fairbanks	Noel Wien Public Library 1215 Cowles Street
April 11, 2006	5 PM to 7 PM	Delta	Jarvis West Building 2855 Alaska Highway (Green Building at Mile 1420.5, next to Alaska State Troopers office)
April 12, 2006	5 PM to 7 PM	Glennallen	BLM Glennallen Field Office Mile 186.5 Glenn Highway